



Benny Chong and Bob Doyle

This issue, we feature two ukulele artists. Austin Kaiser brings you another article, this one features Benny Chong. I hope you enjoy it as much as you did Austin's other contributions on George Harrison and Lyle Ritz.

Bob Doyle is the other spotlight artist. If you have never heard of him— or for some reason you don't recall the name, that will all change when you read the article. Bob is a very talented musician and big ukulele enthusiast.

Ohana Ukes sent me a student uke to review. In this issue we have the SK-10S, and for the money, it's a great little uke.

Kala Ukes sent me one of their Tweed Ukulele Amps. What a sweet little amp. We'll be giving this one away, but I really want to add one of these to my own collection. I love it.

We have a review of the Ohana Vita-Uke reproduction, the CKP70, that we are resurrecting for a review of the custom hardshell case that Ohana makes specifically for that uke.

We have a couple of CD

reviews in this issue, too.

Craig Brandau sent me his latest work, "Try to Remember", what a wonderful collection of tunes.

Sarah Maisel's "In the Moment" is another great collection of classic tunes.

There are lots of new ukuleles coming to market. While guitar sales are not as strong as they were in the past, ukulele sales are soaring and every manufacturer is feeling it.

The bad news, if you can call it that, is that many great ukuleles from all the manufacturers are just harder to find in stock. Consumers are buying them as fast as they are being manufactured.

Paradoxically, the good news is that consumers are buying new ukuleles as fast as they are being manufactured.

Some people resent the fact that the popularity of ukulele does not seem to be slowing down any, in fact, it continues to grow.

Personally, I don't resent it at all.

In fact, I actually think that it is one of the best things that has happened in my life-time. When more people learn to play the ukulele, then more people are buying them and more manufacturers are bringing high-quality instruments to market at competitive prices.

Entertainers are taking up ukulele like never before. Combine the quality of the instruments with the skills of many modern artists and we might be witnessing the new "glory days" of ukulele. I think so.

The ukulele has broken new ground and there are more highly-skilled players than ever before. It's all good.

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BENNY CHONG PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES OF JAZZ UKULELE

by Austin Kaiser

Benny Chong is one of the most innovative technical virtuosos in the history of the ukulele. His first album of instrumental jazz uke, *Ukulele Jazz* (2005), is a stunning debut that immediately established the former professional guitarist as the most formidable player in the genre, arguably including Lyle Ritz. Here was an album that took many of the elements of Ritz's approach and presented them in highly advanced arrangements that combined sensitive musicianship with an almost florid virtuosity.

In his excellent liner notes to the album, former University of Hawaii professor of music composition and theory Byron Yasui wrote that Chong's jaw-dropping playing "includes novel left and right hand techniques, chord voicings new to the ukulele." What are some of the hallmarks of Chong's technique? "Chord grips involving open strings mixed with strings stopped at higher frets, right-hand control of different volumes for different strings within the same chord, a silky

smooth strumming technique, rapid single-string picking across the four strings, and lightning fast chord-melody arrangements." Yasui, of course, is himself a ukulele virtuoso of the first order, which makes his astonishment at Chong's playing all the more remarkable.

Chong was well known as the guitarist for the Aliis, who played with Don Ho for decades. But his first musical passion was the ukulele, which he approached through intuition and a highly developed ear rather than formal instruction. Like one of his heroes, Tal Farlow, Chong's unorthodox technique was self-taught. In less gifted hands, this could be an impediment to musical expression. In the case of Benny Chong, however, his idiosyncratic but profound understanding of the ukulele's layout and his experimentation with harmonic intervals far apart on the fretboard has transformed our understanding of the instrument's capabilities. Ohta-San once lamented his inability to play Satie's voicings for major-seventh chords on the



ukulele. Chong's innovations just might make it possible to perform music that was once considered unplayable on the instrument.

I would like to thank Benny Chong for his incredibly detailed and precise answers to my initial questions. The insights he offers are fascinating, as are some of the revelations which appear in print here for the first time. For me, the most interesting of these is that, sometime around 1970, Chong was to make an album of jazz ukulele with none other than Lyle Ritz himself handling the production. Chong even met with Ritz in Los Angeles to discuss ideas for the album, but the project fell through (to Chong's lasting regret). One can only imagine what might have resulted had that collaboration ever come to fruition.

Q: How old were you when you first took up the ukulele? How did you begin to learn?

A: At the age of ten or eleven, I

first started to play the ukulele. I remember going to the beach watching players sitting in a circle passing the ukulele around. Each person would play a solo until they covered all of the songs that they knew, they would start over again, each playing a different song but still one of the songs that was previously played.

Like most beginners I learned to play by watching and asking questions. From these players I learned to tune the ukulele, basic strums, a little about notes, basic chords, and solos.

Some of the ukulele solos of that era were similar to what are being played by today's beginners. Solos on songs like "Crazy G", "Lady of Spain", "Granada", "Hilo March", "Stars and Stripes", etc. ...because we learned songs from each other our way or style of playing was very similar.

Q: How did you advance in your playing?

A: I was very fortunate to have uncles who were professional musicians. Being exposed to the contemporary music that

they played and listened to is probably why I play the type of music I do today. Some of the artists I listened to were the Four Freshmen, Count Basie, Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey, Ella Fitzgerald, Julie London, the Hi Lo's, Barney Kessel, Tal Farlow, and the list is endless.

My uncles had a group called the Among Brothers that played contemporary and Hawaiian music in a contemporary form. They sang in four-part harmony which I completely loved. Alex and Dennis (Kuki) were terrific ukulelists, though it wasn't their



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main instrument. I wasn't ready to play the type of music they played on the ukulele, being a beginner.

Q: What was the first jazz solo you learned?

A: After months and months of playing, practice, and learning, my uncle Kuki taught me my first jazz song, "Prelude to a Kiss." He had a beautiful rendition which I still play exactly as I learned from him, with exception of the single-note ad lib lines that I play in between chord turnarounds and verses. Afterwards, Alex taught me "Dancing on the Ceiling." Talk about being hungry to learn.

Q: Did they help you to understand chords and harmony?

A: Whenever we would visit them or they visit us, I asked a lot of questions about music and the ukulele. I used to draw the ukulele fretboard, filling in the notes on each fret on each string. Then I would ask, "What is a C6 chord." The reply was the C6 chord is comprised of four notes which are C E G A.

I didn't know anything about roots, thirds, fifths and sixths of a chord, but I now knew these four notes made up the C6 chord. My next question: "So if I circle all the C's, E's, G's, and A's on each string, then circle every combination of C E G A on the four strings, I'll find all the different ways of playing the C6 chord on the ukulele?" The answer was yes.

If anyone tries this, you will find many different ways of playing the C6 chord or any four-note chord that you know the notes to. You'll find a lot of chord formation that's not shown in any ukulele chord book that I know of, some of which are impossible to play.

Q: So here are the origins of your innovative chordal work. How did you work out voicings?

A: To hear what some of these impossible chords sounded like, I would lay the ukulele on its back on a table, put three fingers or two fingers and a thumb on the notes I could reach. On the last string, with a pencil in my mouth, I'd place the eraser of a pencil on the note I couldn't reach, press down on it and strum.

Knowing I could never play the chord with four fingers, I thought I could possibly play the same formation of the chord if moved my fingers down the fretboard till one of the strings played was an open one. Sounds complicated, but for me it worked.

Q: Were there any recordings or famous players who inspired you?

A: Prior to Lyle Ritz, the only recordings I had of any ukulele player was one by Harry Kalahiki (whose nickname was "Mungo") and Kiha Kinney, a beach boy who appeared on Diana Shore's radio or television show and was featured on one or two of her songs on an album she recorded. I'm not positive but

this is what I was told. Perry Botkin was another; I had a 45 single of him playing "On the Beach at Waikiki."

Q: What did you get from listening to these records?

A: These early recordings of Mungo, Kiha, and Perry showed the trend in which solo ukulele was headed. These recordings were like educational material; ukulelists copied their songs and passed them on to other players.

Before I heard Lyle play the ukulele, Alex and Kuki were the only musicians I heard that would play songs on the ukulele in an orchestrated form using mostly chords to play the melody. I'm sure there were others out there in ukulele land that did but I didn't know of them.

Q: Were you ever able to see Mungo or Kiha play live?

A: I never had the opportunity to see any of these players perform in person. I know that my uncles knew Mungo and Kiha and played music with them. The only professional musicians I saw play the ukulele in person were my uncles on TV or in person.

Q: How did you discover Lyle Ritz?

A: I was learning to use chords that added harmonic value and sense to the melody. Still I wasn't satisfied and felt there was more that could be done on the ukulele. I could hear

things that I wanted to do on the ukulele but didn't know how to explain what I wanted in musical terms so I could get the answers I wanted. About that time my uncles told me about a jazz ukulele album named *How About Uke?* played by a studio musician from L.A. named Lyle Ritz. That was my first introduction to Lyle.

Q: What impact did his albums have on you?

A: After listening to *How About Uke?* I got hooked, I mean really hooked, on the ukulele. Lyle's level of play was truly masterful, using inversions of chords no one had ever used before.

His chord melodies sounded like an orchestra with strings or a vocal group singing in four-part harmony. His chord solos sounded like a brass or woodwind sections taking a solo in harmony. It was jazz ukulele playing at a level that no one had done before.

I learned every song on that album chord for chord, note for note, stroke for stroke. By the time I was fifteen or so, I played my first professional gig, which was a dance at Kailua High School.

My trio included drums, guitar, and myself on the ukulele. Our music was Lyle Ritz's albums (by then he had released his second LP, *50th State Jazz*) and other contemporary songs I had learned. Those were fun days for me. My ear for music was developing and it was a little easier to figure out some songs

by ear on my own.

Q: How did you come to play other instruments?

A: When I was about 16 years old, I was asked to be part of a quartet, but not as a ukulele player but as a bass player. I asked myself, "Why not?" I became a bass player of a quartet that included a guitar player, a drummer, and a vibraphone player. We played all over for birthday parties, weddings, dances, graduation parties, just about anywhere there was work.

At seventeen, a junior in high school, I was asked to play bass with a Latin group whose piano player and Latin percussionist were well-known seasoned veterans of Waikiki.

It was hard for me, still being a student and working or rehearsing at night. I really learned a lot about Latin music through their teaching, while gaining musical experience playing with them. During all of this musical experience, I still found time to play the ukulele but it was mostly for my enjoyment.

Q: When did you decide to become a professional musician?

A: After graduating from high school, I was approached by Rudy Aquino, the vibraphone player whom I played bass with while in school and with the Latin quartet. In those days there was a draft system in which you had to serve a full

term in the armed services. You could wait to be drafted into the Army or enlist into the military service of your choice.

Rudy had this idea that we enlist into the Air Force and try to get into the Air Force Band. This way we would get our military obligation out of the way and also take some courses in college to earn some credits toward a degree. After having a meeting with recruiters from the band, it didn't look very promising for us. They didn't have any positions for the instruments we played.

As we were leaving, Sargents Keifer and Hayashi approached us and told us that the Air Force Special Service Band was looking for a group to represent Hawaii and that if we could form a group they would record us and send the recordings as an audition to the Special Service Band Unit in Washington, DC. This was the start of the group "The Aliis."

Rudy thought I was going to be the bass player of that group but I told him I wanted to play the guitar. Rudy told me "I didn't know you played the guitar." I responded by saying "Sure I do," and I went out and bought a guitar and proceeded to play the guitar.

Q: Was the transition to guitar easy, given your background on the uke?

A: Since I was using the D.G.B.E tuning on the ukulele and it's the same as the first four strings of the guitar, I really didn't have

much problem adapting to the guitar. The only difference was I didn't know how to use the fifth and sixth strings so I purchased a guitar chord book and did some woodshedding to familiarize myself with forming chords.

This was the beginning of my instrumental career as a guitarist. We were accepted into the Special Service Band stationed at Bolling Air Force Base in Washington, DC.

Our primary job was to perform shows at the Officers and NCO clubs throughout the U.S., and any special function that needed us. We performed at the State Department for foreign diplomats, and made an appearance on the Arthur Godfrey Show in New York. I got to play a couple of songs on his ukulele for him before we performed on his show.

We were also being scheduled to perform for President Kennedy at one of his lawn parties at the White House, but we all know what happened on November 22, 1963. We did a short tour with the Special Service Band and were honorably discharged in the summer of 1964.

Q: What happened to your ukulele playing after you became a guitarist? Did you ever play it with the Aliis?

A: During the Sixties, the only recording of me playing the ukulele was on the Aliis' first LP. I played the ukulele, congas, and sang a song called "Lover."

This was one of the rare times that I did play the ukulele. The ukulele wasn't as popular as it is today and it was much easier to explore harmonies and chords on the guitar with its two extra strings.

At a party at our manager's home, someone brought a tenor ukulele. I asked if I could play it, and I sat down and started playing some songs. Our manager happened to be standing nearby listening and said that I should record a ukulele LP and that he knew nothing about the ukulele.

He asked me who would be a good producer for a ukulele LP, and I responded "Lyle Ritz," because he knows the instrument better than anyone I know and can also arrange any type of instrumentation behind it if needed. I didn't think much of it at the time, or I thought Irv (our manager) wasn't serious.

During rehearsals a few months later in L.A., I walked Irv with Lyle Ritz. We talked about the ukulele and I played a few songs for Lyle before he agreed to produce the album for me. This was around early 1970.

In those days there were no computers. Our source of communication was the telephone which was very expensive or by mailing cassette tapes to each other. Both of us were working as professional musicians, so, in between our work and traveling, it was very difficult to get together.

Q: A Benny Chong instrumental ukulele album produced by Lyle Ritz would have been a great antidote to Tiny Tim in 1970. What a shame it didn't happen.

A: It would have been a lot easier if I lived in Los Angeles, but the bottom line is, it's my fault for not trying to keep the project going, and it was a major mistake in my life.

Available to me was the best jazz ukulele player in the world, who knew the instrument better than anyone, and I didn't take advantage of that opportunity. So about [mid-1970] or so, my ukulele playing ended with my new Kamaka baritone ukulele I purchased for the LP being placed in "storage" (the closet).

Q: So how did you emerge decades later as a full-time ukulelist?

A: Fast forward to about 1999. I was cleaning out my closet and found my Kamaka baritone. In the earlier years the best amplification for the ukulele was a pickup that was held in place by a large rubber band that stretched around the ukulele. Well, my pickup was still in place and the rubber band had cracked and fused itself to the ukulele. After cleaning the ukulele I went to the music store to purchase strings and another pickup. I had them install the best pickup they had.

I took it to work at the Don Ho Show and played it on some of the songs that I thought would add a nice but different feel. Don loved it and asked me to

use the ukulele every night on any song that I thought it might enhance. So begins my renewed ukulele adventure.

It's been nearly 30 years and it was nice to play the ukulele again, especially since it was the first instrument that I started on. Don was starting to feature me as a soloist and a few months later Dr. Byron Yasui called asking me if I would be part of a concert featuring the ukulele.

Byron, Lyle Ritz, Jake Shimabukuro, and Gordon Marks were the ukulele soloists featured. According to Byron, Lyle dropped out of the concert and recommended me. Byron never heard me play the ukulele but said that he knew I was a good musician. With Lyle's recommendation, it was enough for him to accept me as part of the concert, unheard.

The concert series was called "The Art of Solo Ukulele" and we performed on the different islands from about late 1999 or early 2000 until 2002. From there, all of us took different paths as soloists; four different but distinct styles.

Q: Obviously, this has been a very inspiring time in your musical life.

BC: For me it's like fate. I never dreamed I would be playing the ukulele again. I have been featured with the symphony as a soloist, doing concerts in Japan, California, and Hawaii, giving workshops, and teaching. I even got to perform with Lyle

Ritz at several different functions and occasionally with some of the best jazz musicians in the world who would come to watch me play. How much better can it get?

Q: How do you develop your arrangements?

A: Questions have been asked many times on how I come up with some of the harmonies that I use in the ukulele solos that I've done. It's always done by what I call "creativity by ear."

When trying to learn a song as a solo, I find that I hear different ways to approach certain passages using different chords or inversions and perhaps even changing the melody slightly to match certain chord progressions. In doing this you are creating your own arrangement and identity, but you shouldn't forget the original melody and chords of the song in case someone sits in with you or you with them.

There is a difference in learning and arranging a song and improvising a solo, be it single lines or chord solos. Arranging a song on the ukulele can be easy or hard depending on the range of the song and the amount of creativity you put into it. A song like "Spring Can Really Hang You Up The Most" was difficult because of range of the song and what I wanted to do with it, but the song "Lush Life" wasn't as difficult.

Q: Some pieces are easier to adapt to the instrument than others.

A: It is important to realize that the tonal playing range of the ukulele using the re-entrant tuning (high 4th string) is just over two octaves and the non-re-entrant (low 4th string) almost three octaves. Choosing the correct key to learn a song as a solo utilizing the range of the ukulele can make a difference in the outcome of the arrangement.

Q: Byron Yasui describes your improvisational soloing as "on a par with the very best played on any instrument anywhere." How do you approach improvisation?

A: Ad lib solos are done on the spur of the moment. What you feel while taking a solo, be it single lines or chords, is expressed through melodic passages and played at that instance to coincide with the chords and rhythm of the song. It is not a solo that is worked out in which each time you play the song, you play the exact same solo. To ad lib is to be spontaneous, and another form of creativity.

Q: Much of your playing developed out of intuition or by ear. Do you have any thoughts on the importance of music theory?

A: In learning to play any instrument you are basically learning music theory. Theory covers chord symbols, chord construction, reading, scales, intonation, meter recognition, clefs, notation, intervals, transposing, rhythms, etc.

In essence you are learning about music and applying it to the instrument of your choice. In playing by "ear," you are learning basic forms of theory but not in a technical sense.

One way people develop their ear for music is through listening. I love all types of music and there is no substitute for listening to good music, no matter what genre.

It is important to learn how to play music by using your ear. It is a combination of playing by ear and learning what you are playing that helps you develop and trust your musical instincts, both of which are of equal importance. I believe that if I had someone to teach me in depth about music theory when I was young, at whatever level of musicianship I am at presently, I would have reached the same level a lot sooner and would have had many more years of creativity and productivity.

No one knows everything about music. There is no end to learning and creating. Music is endless and I am still learning. Theory does not teach you passion and creativity. It gives you the tools of knowledge to understand what you are creating through your passion. Remember that we are individuals. We feel and express music in our own individual way, which gives us our own unique identity.

Thank You Austin Kaiser and Benny Chong for a great interview.



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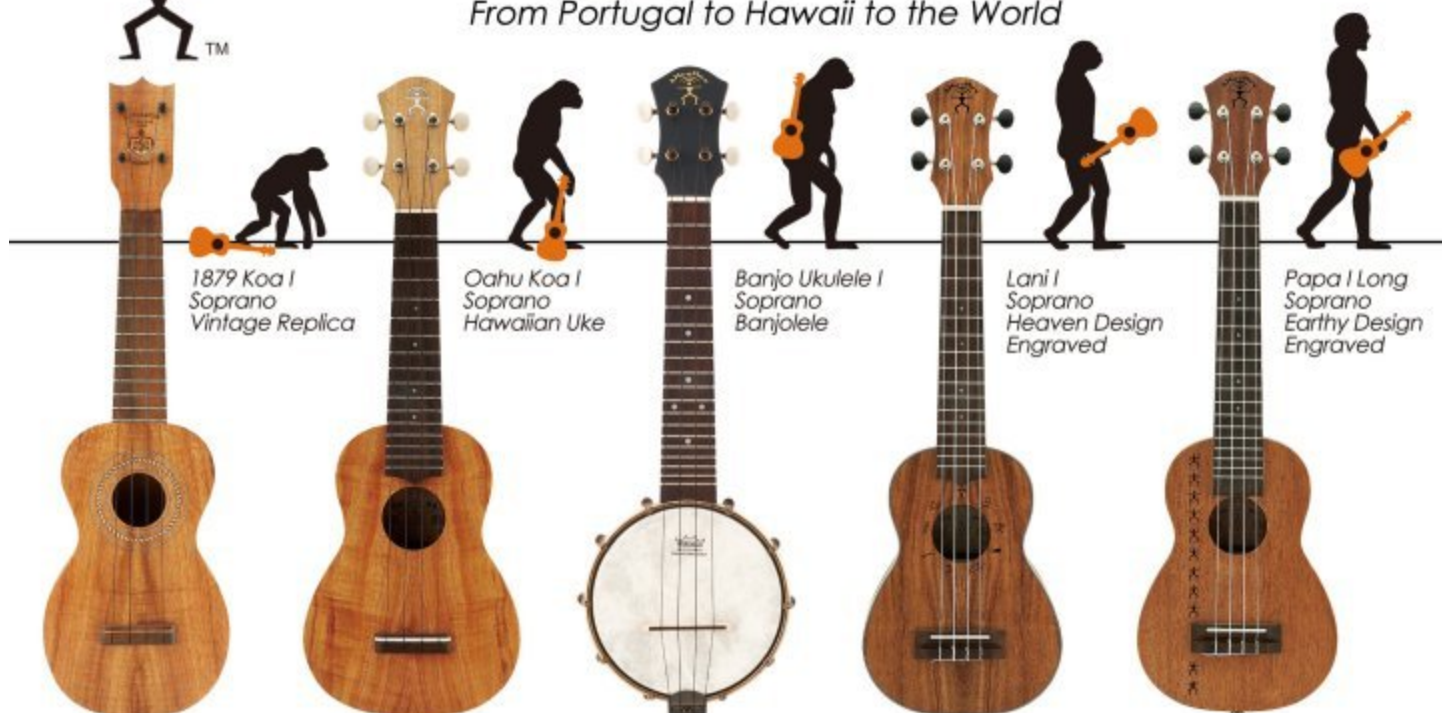
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Stay Clear-Headed

Over the years I have met a lot of great musicians and played with some big "stars" (whose names I cannot mention).

Having played music with these people, it always amazed me how many of them drank way too much and how their performance was degraded in the process.

More than one of these people ended up with serious drug or

drinking problems. And now you know why I cannot mention them by name. One of them even committed suicide.

If you want to play music for a living, it is wise to maintain the policy of staying away from drugs and don't drink alcohol while performing.

I do know some people that manage to drink in moderation while playing, and that is good

for them, but if you ever sense that drinking while playing has a negative effect on your music, then take the no-drinking policy.

Remember, it all comes down to PROFESSIONALISM.

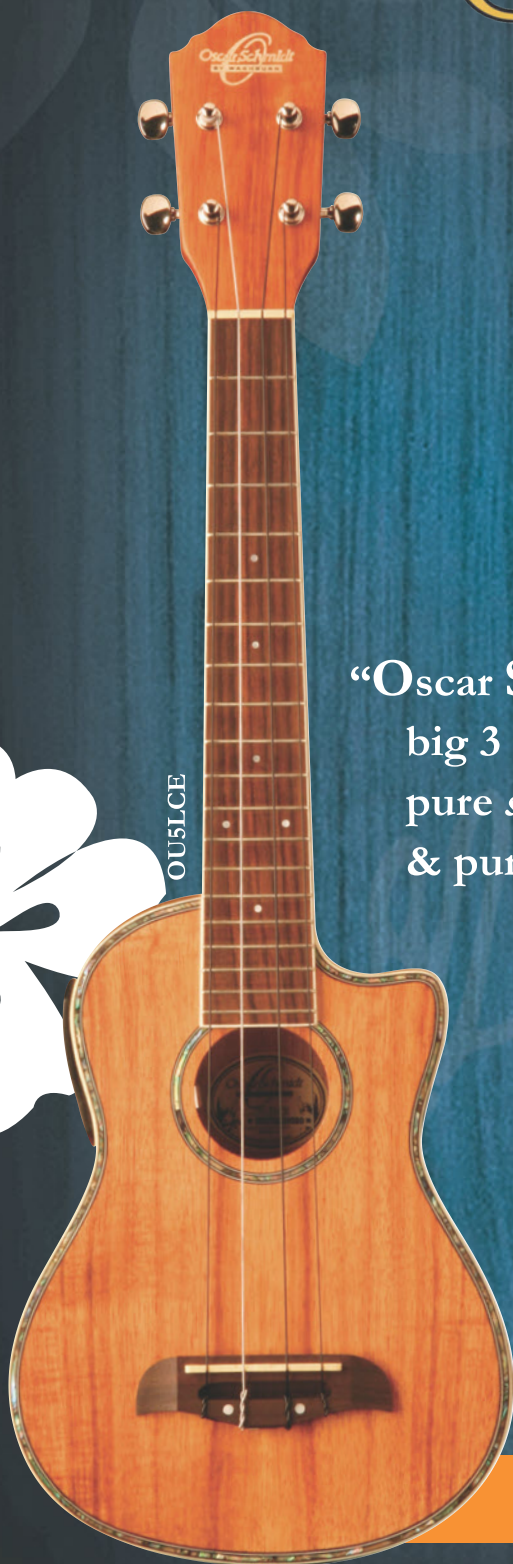
Even super-stars can be banned from some venues because they show up drunk and put on a lousy show. You don't want to be part of that crowd. And if you do drink and play, have a designated driver along to make sure that everyone gets home safe and sound.



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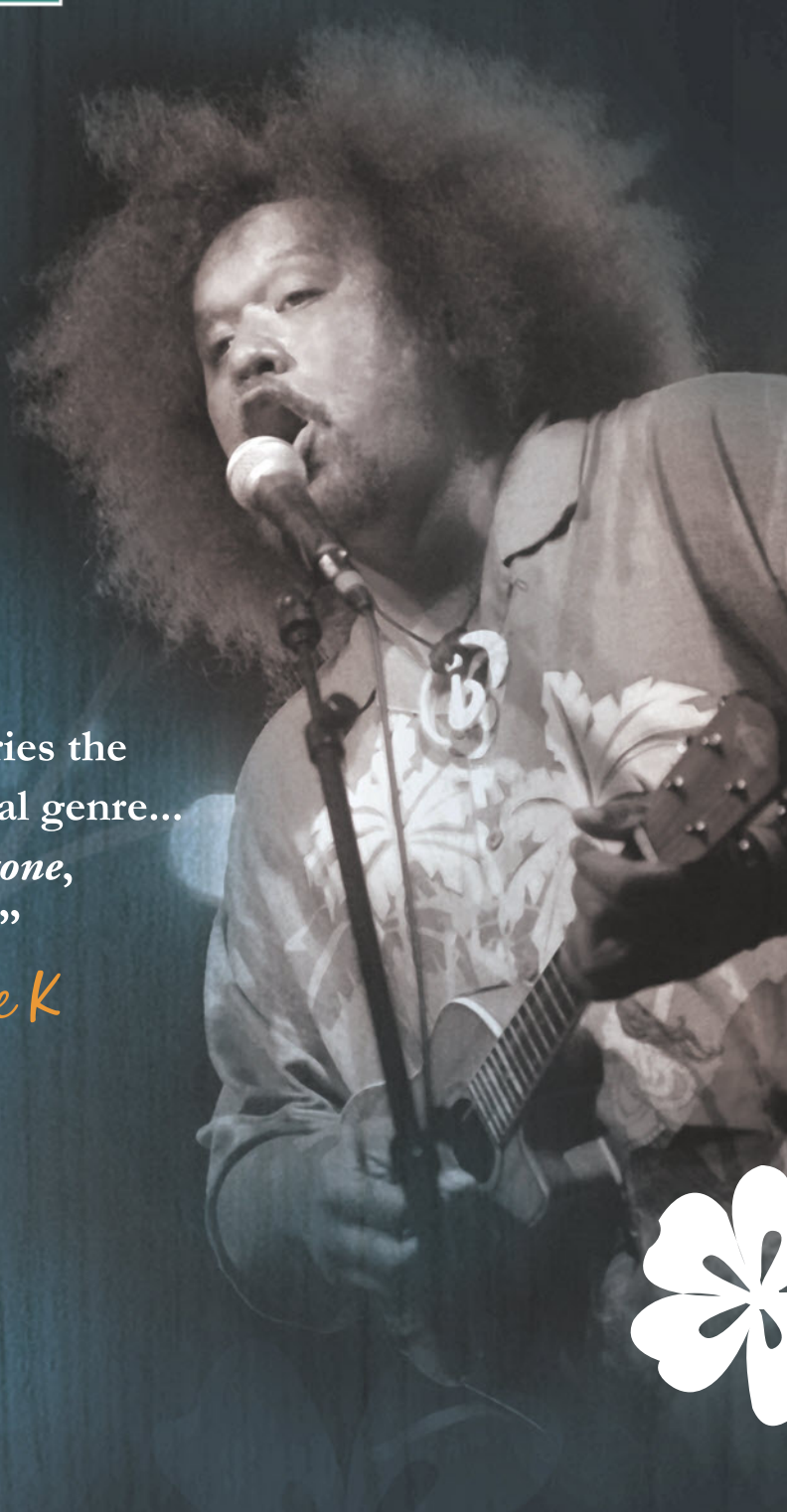
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Ohana SK-10S

When it comes to budget ukuleles and "starter ukes" there are plenty of offerings in music stores and on the internet. Very few compare to the quality of the Ohana SK-10S.

This little ukulele might be a laminated wood instrument, but it is not cheaply built. In fact, the build quality is really quite good.

The body is three-ply laminate which means that it is durable for young student-players. You don't have to worry as much about this uke surviving some abuse. The outer ply is visually appealing. I really love the wood grain on this instrument.

The fretboard is rosewood and so is the bridge. The frets are perfectly dressed and the intonation is good all the way up the neck.

The tuners are open-geared and their weight is a good fit for this uke since the body is three-ply laminate. The balance is excellent and the uke is comfortable to play as a result.

The solid mahogany neck is well-shaped and true. The headstock, also solid mahogany, is adorned with a pearlescent Ohana logo that looks great.

If Ohana cut any corners at all it is in the choice of GHS strings, and I think that they are well-suited for this instrument. Their black color looks great against the mahogany top.

This ukulele is actually a very good performer for the price. It sounds nice and has enough volume to be heard. It has great balance across all the strings. I finger-picked it and strummed it with excellent results.

The fit and finish are perfect. In fact, this uke does not have a blemish anywhere. That is rare on a ukulele in this price-range. Most often, ukes at this retail price have finish flaws and other cosmetic issues, but this instrument was assembled with care.

The tuner buttons are big and easy for little fingers to turn. They work well and hold tune well. While traditional players might opt for friction tuners, remember, learning to play is the focus on a student uke. Tuning should not be a struggle. I prefer to teach kids to play the ukulele rather than trying to teach them to finesse a friction peg into pitch. Besides, people playing out of tune ukes drives me bonkers.



I HIGHLY recommend this ukulele for anyone teaching a child to play. It is rugged, yet performs well. It is laminated, but lightweight enough for kids to hold and play. It is a very high-quality student uke with all the necessities and nice tone, too. You can't beat this uke for an excellent entry-level player or a BEACH uke for that matter. Carry this one anywhere without fear.



Ohana CKP-70

I originally reviewed the CKP-70 in Issue Four. I decided to do a second review for this issue since I am also reviewing the custom hard-shell case that Ohana now offers for this uke.

In the review from Issue Four, I mentioned that the CKP-70 had a look that really appeals to me. I love the lute-like appearance and I still think that it is a great ukulele to use when playing Irish pub songs.

This "Vita-Uke" reproduction has a laminated mahogany back and sides and a solid spruce top. Ohana now makes a Vita-style uke with laminated rosewood back and sides if you prefer. Because they are laminated, they sound about the same.

The neck is a traditional soprano scale, twelve-frets to the body and I have really grown to love that configuration. Steve Boisen, of "The Barnkickers" says that twelve-fret necks are better for finger-picking and he is right! That is one thing I love about this ukulele, it is wonderful for finger-picking.

The action on this uke is superb and the frets are dressed perfectly. The one pictured on this page is the original uke sent

to me by Ohana. I bought another one (pictured in the case on the next page). I gave one to my wife's nephew. He carries it all over the place and plays it all the time.

The neck is solid mahogany and the headstock is mahogany with a rosewood face-plate. The Ohana logo is a decal, not an inlay, but it looks nice and is clearly visible.

I love the shallow curve of the neck. It fits comfortably in my hands. The frets are all nicely dressed and there are no sharp edges. Intonation is perfect.

The tuners are open-geared with mini pearlescent buttons that look great and make tuning easy.

When this ukulele arrived at my door (I bought it from Huggy's Music), it had the old Aquila Nylgut strings on it. I changed those for new Nylgut strings (see the new Nylgut string review in this issue). They sounded great. After playing a while, I changed strings again— this time, I put on Martin Fluorocarbon strings and I really love the result.

The "old" Nylguts sounded great. The "New" Nylguts sounded better. The Martin's sounded



wonderful. You can't go wrong with Nylguts or the Martin strings so whatever your personal preference, you should be pleased.

So, how does the CKP-70 compare with traditional figure-eight-style ukuleles?

When it comes to playing, this ukulele is LOUD, but it still sounds sweet. It is louder with new Aquila Nylguts, so if you want maximum volume, keep that in mind. If you finger-pick a lot, you might prefer the Nylguts.

With either strings, this ukulele has greater volume than most of the ukuleles I have played and that is quite a few. I can't even tell you just how many ukes I have played.

On stage, this uke is easy to mic because it projects sound so well. It really is an excellent choice for professional gigging musicians. At \$149 (Huggy's price), you can't go wrong.



Ohana UVC-24 Vita-Uke

The Ohana UVC-24 is a custom-made case that Ohana manufactures for their CKP-70 Vita-Uke reproduction.

This hard-shell case has a pebble-grain that is durable and looks great. The interior is well-padded and has a little accessory compartment under the instrument's neck. It is small, but most clip-on tuners will fit inside comfortably.

I am really thrilled that Louis Wu

of Ohana sent me one of these cases. They are not in wide circulation, yet, but they should be stocked wherever the Vita-uke reproduction is sold. Nothing protects this uke like this case, nothing!

If I could recommend one improvement, it would be to add a little pad above the neck under the lid to make sure that the uke does not move around at all when the lid is closed. My favorite tuner won't fit in the



compartment, so that gives me an excuse to buy a clip-on tuner. :o)

There is no key-lock on this case. There is on the other Ohana hard-shell cases, so maybe that is an over-sight and has since been changed. With or without a lock, I feel that my uke is much safer in this case.

If you own an Ohana Vita-Uke reproduction, this case is one of the best investments you can make. List price \$89 (USD).





Bob Doyle - Uke Enthusiast

About a week ago I was on Twitter posting little blurbs from my blog and promoting my last book, "Get Happy, Write Away" when I happened to catch a TWEET from Bob Doyle saying that he loved playing his ukulele. I immediately did a search for all things Bob Doyle in order to make contact. I wanted to interview Bob for this issue of *ukulele player*.

If you are not familiar with the book "The Secret" or the movie of the same name, then you probably don't know Bob, but if you have watched the movie or read the book, then you have already been introduced to Bob, in a manner of speaking.

The Secret is a book written by Rhonda Byrne and features "teachers" of what is called "The Law of Attraction", and while I won't get into the teaching here, let's just say that it involves visualization and positive thinking skills, confidence building and personal development techniques. Many of the teachings are time-tested and Bob is one of those teachers featured in the book and the movie.

If Bob Doyle played ukulele, to me, that is a story worth telling and of interest to our readers.

As it turns out, Bob Doyle is not just a ukulele enthusiast, he's a top-notch musician, multi-instrumentalist, a composer, and has a good singing voice, too. I might add that Bob is an accomplished photographer as well.

I watched a bunch of Bob's music videos and listened to Bob's original compositions. This is one talented guy.

Here is the interview... Enjoy...

Q: What is it about photography and music that so often binds them together?

A: I'm not sure. I've just always been a very audio/visual guy. Sounds and interesting images stimulate something in my brain that really engages me with life. I love being able to create that stuff. Given that my professional work, in essence, is about creating one's experience of reality, it's no surprise that a tool like Photoshop where you literally can create anything you can imagine (if you take the time to learn it-- which I do) is a big part of my creative life. Same with music. I love listening to music, but creating it-- letting it flow through me-- takes the experience of music to a whole new level. Combine the



<http://www.youtube.com/user/boundless>



imagery WITH the music and it's darned near nirvana. :)

Q: How long have you been a musician?

A: I've had a musical instrument of some sort at the end of my fingers since I was very young, because they were in the house. My mother and father had guitars, and we had an organ. However, I didn't really get into doing anything with music until I was around ten or so.

Q: Was the piano your "first" instrument?

A: Actually-- and I love that this is

the case— the first instrument I actually remember playing was the ukulele! We had one hanging around the house and I have vague memories of learning "Top of the World" by "The Carpenters" and something I think was called "Everybody Loves Saturday Night" that my mother would sing. I think it had two chords.

I migrated to the guitar soon after and didn't pick up the uke again for approximately thirty-five to forty years!

Q: Did you start playing music when you were a child?

A: I remember spending a lot of time as a young teenager with the guitar, learning songs from two different "Lennon & McCartney" song books, which I still actually have. Eventually, the piano and keyboards got most of my attention.

Q: When did you first start composing music?

A: While I wrote a few little things as a teenager both on the guitar and the piano, I got much more serious about composing in college when electronic keyboards became a little more financially realistic. Once I got the Korg M1 when I was about 22, I became a composing machine, with aspirations of becoming a composer for film.

Q: It appears that you record music at home, what equipment do you use?

A: My setup is actually fairly

simple. Since the bulk of what I played (until my uke obsession because a couple of years ago) was MIDI based, most of my equipment is virtual. Lots of VST synths and plug-ins running in Cubase on my PC. Basically, I've just got a MIDI keyboard controller controlling sounds that are all software based.

Now that I record a lot of ukulele videos with singing I've pulled out a Shure SM58 and run that along with my MiSi Trio equipped Kala Tenor through the Harmony GXT from TC-Helicon, through a simple Mackie mixing board and into the computer. That's basically it. Very simple stuff.

Q: How long have you played ukulele?

A: I picked up the ukulele again about two and half years ago, and haven't put it down. Occasionally I sit down at a keyboard or pick up a guitar, but 99.9999% of the time, I'm holding a ukulele.

Q: How did you re-discover the ukulele?

A: As mentioned, there was one in my life at a very young age. Also (ironically), my sister-in-law had brought one back from Hawaii for our son, but it was more or less "toy quality", and it sat in his room completely ignored for years. I didn't remember how to tune it or anything and had no interest in it at all.

But a few years ago, my wife and I were at a Jimmy Buffet

concert and he played a song or two on the uke, and my wife leaned over and said the words that changed my whole life: "It would be fun to have a ukulele." And I thought, "Hmm. It WOULD be fun to have a ukulele!"

Her birthday was just around the corner and I bought two little Ovation Applause soprano ukes for "her" birthday. I started jumping around the web to find chord charts, and found a lot of old standards over at <http://www.doctoruke.com>. I think the first song I learned was "I Don't Want to Set the World on Fire" which I actually only knew because it played in the background of a video game I was playing at the time!

Something happened to me that was immensely profound in terms of the direction of my life. The ukulele, and the fact that it was so non-intimidating, basically allowed me to start really expressing myself creatively without all the garbage I had going on in my head about my musical performances having to be perfect, which was something that has plagued me for years.

And I started singing. I'd never considered myself a singer, and the idea of performing music and singing had petrified me for years. With the uke, that all went away and I found myself posting videos on YouTube every other day.

My song memorization ability improved exponentially, which was another big breakthrough for me because for years I'd

had a story that "I can't memorize lyrics."

The ukulele has truly empowered me in countless ways.

Q: How many ukuleles do you own?

A: Ha ha. I actually own about fifty-six ...but fifty of those are Makala Dolphins that I purchased for workshops that I do called "Project Uke" which are all about using the ukulele as a tool for facilitating breakthroughs in creative self-expression, like I experienced.

Aside from those I have a Kala Acacia tenor fitted with the MiSi Trio pickup, a Kala thin body travel tenor, a Kala concert tenor (which I purchased shortly after those Ovations because I realized my fingers wanted something bigger), and recently someone gifted me with the Kala Pocket Uke.

Then of course there's the uke that I recovered from my son's room that is now in tune (but doesn't really stay that way) and the two Ovations.

Needless to say, there's a ukulele of some kind in just about every room of the house.

Author's Note... I asked this next question before I knew Bob's answer to the last question since this interview was conducted via e-mail. I had to laugh...

Q: Ukulele players often joke about "UAS", ukulele acquisition

syndrome, has it "hit you" yet?

A: The answer to the previous question probably makes that abundantly clear. UAS set in almost IMMEDIATELY, and I'm not sure there is a cure.

Q: Do you have a favorite ukulele?

A: That's a tough one. I tent to play the Acacia tenor the most because it's the one I'll use for open mics. In second place would be the thin body travel tenor, because it's tuned to Low G, which is great for a lot of the standards I do. I'll be putting a MiSi in that as well over the next week or two, so it will quickly start getting played even more.

But I love them all. They all get played a lot.

Q: As successful as you are, you could afford any ukulele your heart desired, is there a "dream uke" in your mind?

A: Last year I took a tour of the Collings Guitar Factory in Austin, Texas. Those things are beautiful beyond belief, but I didn't actually get to play one.

When I'm so happy with the ukes that I pay a few hundred dollars for, it's still kind of a leap to justify ukes that cost close to \$2000 –but I'm sure the day will come. :)

Q: One of the tricks I teach people who are learning to play ukulele is to use visualization and imagine themselves playing through a piece in their head until it feels totally "real" to

them. Have you "visualized" yourself playing when you learn new tunes and compose new pieces?

A: You know, it's ironic that given that so much of what I teach in "real life" involves visualization that I don't do more of that– but I think that in the case of the ukulele, I'm too busy just DOING it to visualize it! I definitely think about performing, etc. but I can't say that I've ever taken it on as an exercise.

Q: You play piano and ukulele. Do you play any other instruments?

A: I do have several guitars around. In the two years leading up to that first ukulele acquisition, I had really committed myself to getting better at the guitar. I have several Ovations (six and twelve-string) and I even bought a resonator which I started to learn and then the ukulele came along and there is literally dust on all my guitars.

In school I spent a few years on the violin, french horn, and trumpet– but those days are long gone...

Q: Where can our readers "buy" your tunes online?

A: I have something of a virtual store over at this URL:

<http://www.soundclick.com/bobdoyle>

Those are nearly all the work I did in the electronic world. I think there may be one sort of "test piece" that has a uke in it,

but I'd hardly call it complete.

Q: Have you thought about doing a complete ukulele album?

A: The timing is perfect for that question because I'm actually talking to two different producers about that right now, and I'll be headed to Austin, Texas in mid-September to start working on one of those projects. At this stage, we're planning to do covers of the a lot of the jazzy standard stuff you see me doing over at this URL:

<http://www.bobdoylemusic.com>

That could definitely evolve before we start recording, and I AM trying to work up some original stuff, but it would most likely be instrumental in nature unless I'm divinely inspired with some lyrics by then.

Q: You have incorporated music in some of your seminars. Will you be playing ukulele at any of those speaking engagements in the future?

A: Last October was the first time I pulled out a uke at a speaking event. Nobody knew it was coming and I was telling my story of my own breakthroughs in creative self-expression then pulled out the uke and everyone went nuts. It was about 300 people, and I'd only performed the uke in front of people *once*, and that was at a very small open mic down the street.

My heart was *racing* I can tell

you. I played a one-minute version of "Pure Imagination" (from Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory) which fit in perfectly with the theme of my talk, and it was the very last segment of a whole weekend event with a variety of speakers. It was an amazing moment– at least for me. The response was phenomenal– way better than I Expected– and I'll be returning to that event again this year in San Diego, but this time I'll be even MORE ukulele focused and have several with me so that I can get some audience participation.

I mentioned "Project Uke" which I put together shortly after that event in San Diego as an experiment. I gathered about a dozen people in Austin– some musicians, some not– with the

intention of giving them all a breakthrough experience in creative self-expression.

The uke did not disappoint, and it was indeed a very transformative experience for all involved, and we're talking about doing another one soon, but on a larger scale this time. It's something I want to do much more of, and maybe go on the road with.

Q: Do you have any future plans for music, future goals or dreams you want to pursue?

A: Aside from the CD projects, I'd really like to get a band together, an upright bass, a guitar player, drummer, female vocalist– you probably get the idea. That would be a total blast.

Bob Doyle Links on the WEB:

<http://boundlessliving2.com/wealth-beyond-reason>

<http://www.boundlessliving.com/members/>

<http://www.youtube.com/wealthbeyonddreason>

<http://www.facebook.com/boundlessliving>

<http://www.myspace.com/bobdoyleband>

<http://www.twitter.com/bobdoyle>

<http://bobdoylesecret.com/>

<http://www.wealthbeyonddreason.com/mystory.html>

<http://www.linkedin.com/pub/bob-doyle/2/55a/2b2>

<http://www.abundance-and-happiness.com/bob-doyle.html>
(lots of great info)



Soprano Wolfelele Kit

Thus far, we have reviewed the tenor and baritone Wolfelele kits. In this issue, we are reviewing the soprano "laminated" Wolfelele kit. We will be reviewing the solid-wood soprano Wolfelele in the next issue— and at that point, we will compare the solid-wood kit and the laminated kit. We'll also make a video to give you a sound comparison.

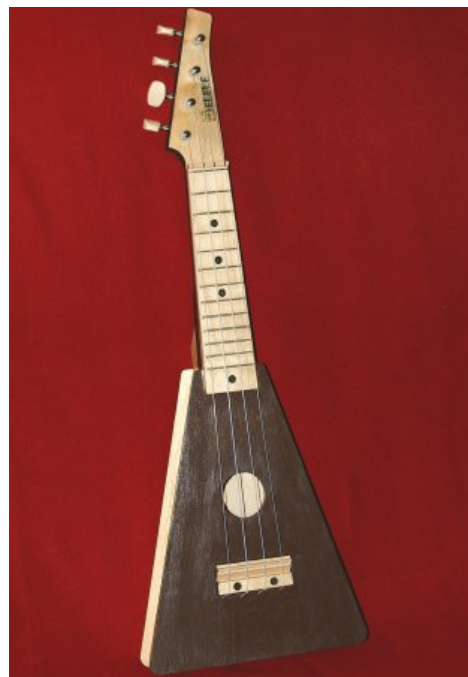
This soprano kit comes with a prefabricated neck, like the others, but there is a "press-in" saddle made of maple. The fret board appears to be walnut. The top and back are baltic birch laminate. The sides and butt-plate are Canadian Cherry.

Like the other Wolfelele kits, this one features that same dovetail joint for the neck and sides. You can see it in the left-hand picture below.

The image on the right shows the sides and butt-plate in position and the back and fretboard are lying beside the partially assembled uke.

I used MinWax clear-coat finish over the uke, then painted the top with a brown acrylic. I wanted to make another "distressed" uke to match the other Wolfeleles that I have built and reviewed.

As I write this, the paint is drying.



When it is fully dry, I plan to steel-wool the finish a little to thin the paint and give the uke more distressing. Then I'll photograph the end result.

The soprano Wolfelele is my favorite of the bunch. I lowered the action a bit on it and strung it with Aquila's new Nylguts. I wanted to bring out as much volume as possible on this uke and when I get a chance to build the solid-wood Wolfelele, I'll put the same strings on that one to compare them.

The soprano is well-balanced and fun to play. I enjoyed this little project. In fact, I have become so familiar with these that it takes me almost half the time it originally did to build one of the kits.

If you want a fun little ukulele kit to build, the soprano Wolfelele is a good choice. The finished uke is rugged and sounds good. I changed the strings to Nylguts. It is a playable uke and takes almost no effort to build.





Aquila's New Nylgut Strings

First off, I'd like to thank Mimmo of Aquilacorde (the Aquila Strings people) for giving me the opportunity to review the new Nylgut strings and also BioNytons at the same time.

I have lots of ukuleles sitting around here, as you might imagine. The first thing I did was start to re-string a bunch of ukuleles and stretching strings to get them to stay in tune. One or two ukes would be entertaining, but, as many ukuleles as I re-strung here gets to be a lot of work.

I posted several videos on YouTube at this URL:

<http://www.youtube.com/theukeplayermag/>

Yes, that is very tiny print, but it is a clickable link, so after reading the review, click on the link and watch the videos. I play a little portion of "Ain't She Sweet" to give you a comparison of these ukes in before and after videos.

The first thing I noticed with every ukulele I strung with the NEW Nylguts is that the strings did not stretch nearly as much as the older formula Nylguts. That is a great benefit because it means that the ukes stayed in tune much better, much sooner. I never would have been able to do these videos in

a single day had the strings been of the older formula. They would not have settled nearly enough to stay in tune.

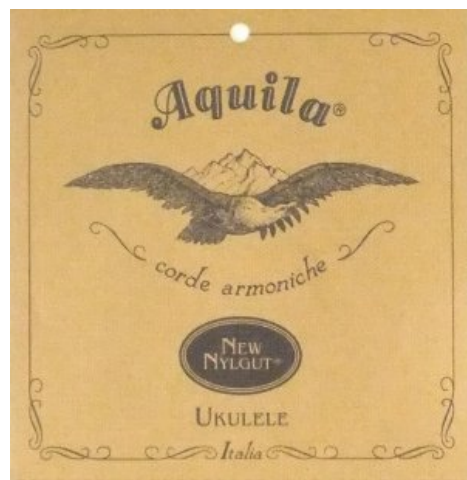
The next thing I noticed was that the strings did not squeak as much as the older formula. After a little while playing on the new strings, it was easier to get them to squeak. I have dry hands, so I am not really sure, but after playing a while, they were easier to make squeak.

The sustain was good on every ukulele I tried. The tone was about the same as always.

On budget ukes, the Aquila strings brought out the best performance and tone— which I already anticipated. In the case of lightweight ukes and high-end instruments, there were some times when the strings produced more volume than I needed. But that was no surprise either.

When I switched to BioNylon strings on some of the same ukuleles that I fit with the new Nylguts, the tone was slightly different and sustain, in several cases, was reduced. On other ukuleles, I did not get lower sustain. That's interesting.

Why the drop in sustain? I am



not sure. The strings also stretched less than the new Nylguts. In fact, there was quite a bit of difference between the two in that regard. On virtually every uke I fit with the BioNylon strings, there was almost no stretching at all. Keep that in mind when you string your instruments.

Over all, the string tests tell me that Aquila Nylguts are the best choice for most budget-priced ukes. They are the clear choice for laminated ukes, period.

Ultimately, your choice of strings is a personal preference. Some ukes might not be a good match for Nylguts or BioNytons, but, from a manufacturer's point of view, the New Aquila Nylguts are the obvious choice.



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Sarah Maisel - In the Moment

Sarah Maisel and Rolltop Records do it again with this great new CD release.

This collection of tunes mixes "classics" from different eras. Here is the song list:

1. East of the Sun (West of the Moon)
2. For Once In My Life
3. Quiet Nights of Quiet Stars
4. Ukulele Lady
5. Carolina On My Mind
6. Smile
7. I'll Have to Say I Love You In A Song
8. I Will
9. Haole Hula
10. A Foggy Day (In London Town)

"East of the Sun (West of the Moon)" kicks off this collection of songs. Written in 1934 by Brooks Bowman. Sarah does an excellent job with it. She gives it that classic jazz vibe. Nice guitar accents and bass.

"For Once In My Life" was a hit in the 1960s for Miller and Murden. I like the intro, stylish and understated. I'd love to hear some backup harmonies in this tune. Nice chord-melody and lead work.

"Quiet Nights of Quiet Stars" There is some very nice drum and percussion work in this number. There is just the right amount of reverb exactly where it's needed. You can really appreciate professional quality

production on a CD like this. The mix is excellent, too.

"Ukulele Lady" is a Gus Kahn and Richard Whiting number. I have a soft spot for Gus Kahn. He's one of my all-time favorite song lyricists. Once again, this song begins with a nice intro. When Gus Kahn wrote this song, the country was in an Hawaiian Music craze. Lots of "Hawaiian" songs were written on the Mainland and many people never knew the difference. This song, however, has been played all over the Islands.

"Carolina On My Mind" was a smash hit written by James Taylor— another one of my favorite songs of that era. Another nice musical intro. What I'd give for some backup vocals on this song. I found myself picking up a ukulele and playing along— finger-picking ala James Taylor. The song ends with some nice, subtle backup vocals.

"Smile" was originally a Charlie Chaplin tune that was re-arranged years later. It is a classic. This rendition is a little slower-tempo. Very nicely done.

"I'll Have to Say I Love You In A Song" is a Jim Croce classic. Croce met an untimely demise



and it is unfortunate because he had a bunch of hits in a short number of years and then he was gone. This rendition kicks off with the drums. Sarah is faithful to the original. The song is very tight and timing is critical here. The musical interlude is superb. Nice accents and the turn-around was perfect.

"I Will" written by Lennon and McCartney (1968). I was wondering if this was going to be an instrumental version, but nope, Sarah came into the song at almost two minutes. Very nice.

"Haole Hula" 1928, another Hawaiian music boom tune. It has gone on to be a hit in the tourist clubs in the Islands. The steel guitar is nicely done. Sarah is right on cue.

"A Foggy Day (In London Town)" wraps up the CD. Gershwin... Hard to beat George (or Ira for that matter). This song is another classic. This is a musical rendition, but there are lyrics for the song.

Once again, this is a great CD from Sarah Maisel. This is one to buy. Enjoy.



<http://mainlanddukes.com/>

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There is no doubt about it, the viewing audience prefers video over audio any day. There is no need for elaborate production studios, either. Just plop down anywhere and shoot video. All you have to do is play well enough to carry a tune and people sit spellbound. Or play like crap and people think it's great comedy. :o)

Still, if you want to look like a professional, at least shoot your videos in an uncluttered environment and keep your audio track as clean and clear as possible. If not, save the out-takes and laugh a lot.

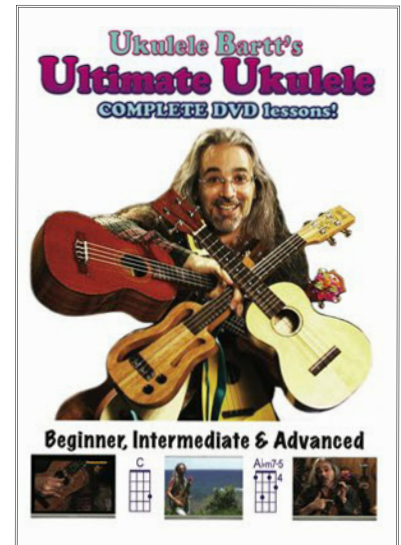


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<http://bartt.net>



ukulele player is created using Serif PagePlus page layout and graphic design software.

<http://www.serif.com>

We loved MoviePlus X5 so much that from now on, we'll be using it to make all our YouTube videos for ukulele player.

<http://www.serif.com/movieplus/>





Craig Brandau - Try to Remember

I received this CD a few days ago. This is the second CD I have had a chance to review from Craig Brandau.

"Try to Remember" is a collection of timeless classic tunes. Here is the line-up:

1. Try to Remember
2. A Man and A Woman
3. Till There Was You
4. Watch what Happens
5. Never My Love
6. Wave
7. When You Wish Upon A Star
8. Honeysuckle Rose
9. Daydream
10. Mona Lisa

"Try to Remember", written by (Tom) Jones and Schmidt. The song was a hit for the "Sandpipers" and that is the rendition I remember. The song was also recorded by Harry Bellafonte and Andy Williams. Craig's instrumental rendition keeps with the original tempo.

"A Man and A Woman" was a major motion picture in 1966 and this was the title song from the soundtrack. A romantic melody. I prefer this to the "trumpets" in most renditions I have heard. It is well suited for the ukulele. Cali Rose is featured in this track.

"Till There Was You" was written by Meredith Wilson. The song

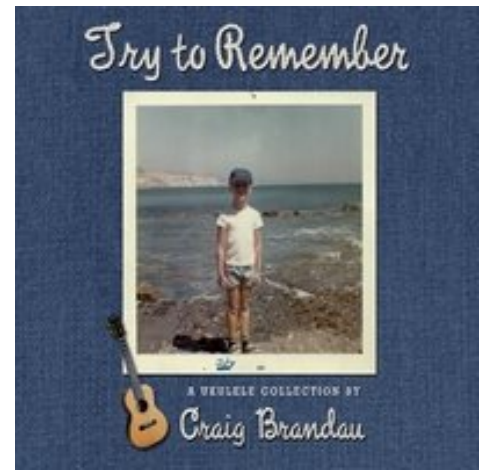
was featured in "The Music Man" and was a big hit. This is a very nice rendition, cleanly played.

"Watch What Happens" was a beautiful sound-track tune written by Jaques Louis Demy, Michel Legrand, and Norman Gimbel. Lots of great songs were written for movies. Sinatra recorded this tune in 1969 and added another hit to his collection. Cali Rose sings on this track. Very nice.

"Never My Love" 1974 tune, and Addrissi Brothers original. I always loved this tune... they don't write songs like this anymore. Nicely played. I love it.

"Wave" I have heard this played as a Bossa Nova and also more classical Jazz. Either way, I like it. Craig gives it a different flavor that leans more toward classic jazz. I like the accents, in particular. I'd love to hear Craig play this live with a jazz trio.

"When You Wish Upon A Star", famed ukulele tune... Think of Cliff Edwards, a.k.a. Ukulele Ike when you hear this song. I like this rendition. The tune was originally written by Washington and Harline. It was used in Pinocchio, the Disney animated classic.



"Honeysuckle Rose" has been played by everyone from Django Reinhardt to Willy Nelson. I remember Louis Armstrong's rendition. Craig makes it his own. Nicely done. The tune was actually written by Fats Waller, with lyrics by Andy Razaf.

"Daydream" is a Cali Rose original song. She sings and Craig plays accompaniment on this number. I like the beat. This has the mood of classic jazz. Here is one talented couple showing what can happen when two creative people play together. I love it.

"Mona Lisa" wraps up the CD. When I hear this tune, I can't help but think of the rendition played by Tommy Emmanuel. This is, however, the best rendition I recall on ukulele. It's a fitting end to an excellent CD.

It will be interesting to see whether Craig and Cali Rose put more music together or continue their own creative projects. I look forward to their blend of talents and hope to hear more in the future.

Well done, Craig and Cali Rose.

Kala Ukulele Amp

Now that acoustic/electric ukuleles are becoming more popular with performing musicians, Kala has started producing Ukulele Amplifiers.

The Kala "Round About" amp can be purchased from Kala's website for \$89 and comes in three different colors (pictured below).

There are tons of amps available today. Most small amps do not sound good with acoustic instruments. The Round About actually sounds really good.

This novel-looking amp is about ten inches in diameter. There is a small speaker "grill" on the front side and a bass port on the backside.

Here are the specs...

SPECIFICATIONS

MAXIMUM POWER OUTPUT: 10w

Speaker: 5" 8 Ohm

Dimensions: 10" diameter

Power Consumption: 12 Watts

Features:

Input Jack

Headphone Jack

Volume (Master)

Treble Control

Bass Control

Power Switch

The amp is available in tweed (my favorite), black, and pink. There are rubber feet on the bottom to keep the amplifier upright and stable. The power

cord is about four feet in length and has a three-prong plug. Wonder if they have thought about making a battery-operated version?

On the amp's control panel are two jacks, the left one is the instrument input. The right one is a headphone output. Next is a volume control. There are two tone controls... Treble, then Bass. The on/off switch is on the far right.

Turn the amp around and on the lower back you will see the bass port opposite the speaker grill that sits on the front-side.

There is a plastic handle on the top of the amp for easy carrying.

I don't have too many ukuleles (or guitars for that matter) that are acoustic/electric. I grabbed the Oscar Schmidt OU5-LCE and plugged it into the amp. Without fiddling with the tone controls, I started to play. Wow, this little amp sounds great. The sound is clear and clean. Right from the start, the amp had excellent acoustic tone.



I am wondering if this amp was "optimized" for acoustic instruments? I realize that there is no possible way that it was at this price-range, but it sure sounds like it.

I compared it to the Fender Frontman 15R I have sitting in my den and while the Fender is much louder, the Kala Round About has better tone.

If it is just dumb luck or great design, I can't be sure, but this little amp is a GEM and I will very likely end up buying one of these. We will be giving this particular one to some lucky reader, just like we have given away all the other Kala ukes and accessories from past reviews.

Great little amp. I highly recommend it for your jams.



ukulele player and Kala present...

ukulele player and Kala Ukuleles came together to bring you this exciting opportunity. One lucky reader will win this great Kala product.



All you have to do is submit your name, an e-mail address, and a shipping address so that if you are the winner, we will be able to ship it to you. You only need to submit your information one time and you will be in the running for all of the Kala Ukulele give-a-ways.

You read about the Kala Round About amplifier in this issue of ukulele player, now, here is your chance to win it. Follow the instructions below...

We will not share your contact information with anyone for any reason.

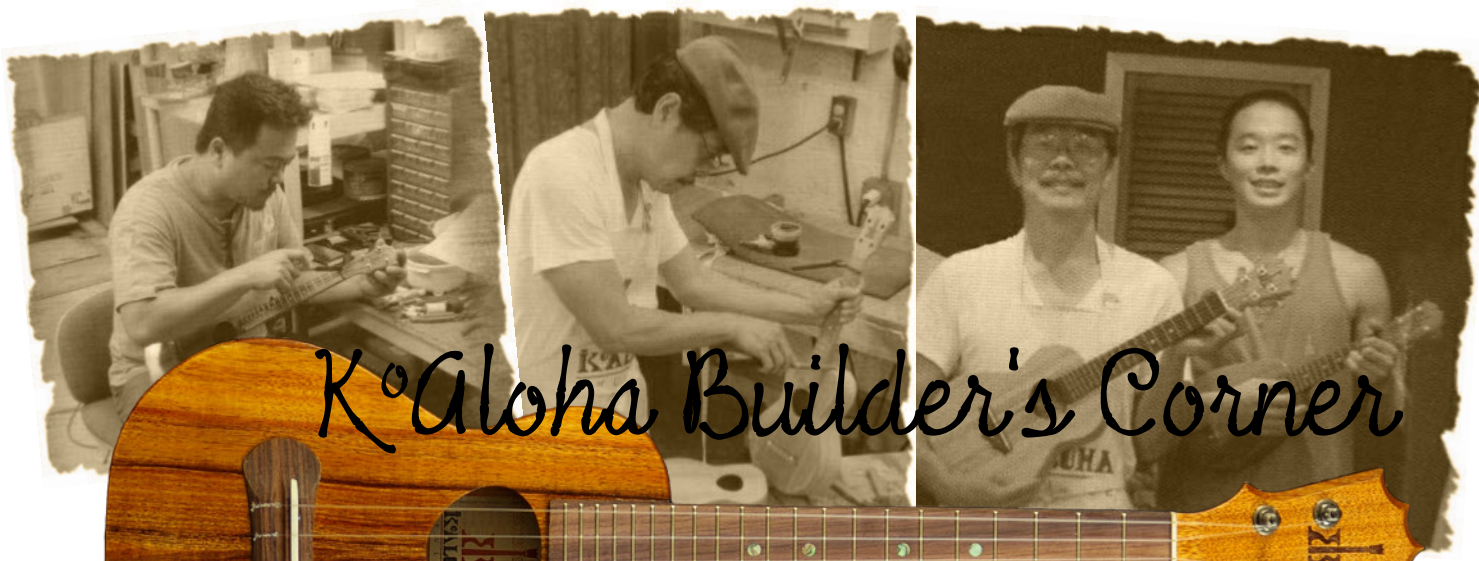
note: if you have trouble with the form, e-mail your entry to giveaway@tricornpublications.com
Include name, shipping address, e-mail address.



Go to this website and fill in the form and click the submit button for your CHANCE to win. There is no purchase necessary. One submission per person will be counted. The lucky winner will be decided by a random number generator program. The contest entry cut-off date will be the 20th of every month of the current issue. The winner will be chosen later that same month. The winner will be announced on Ukulele-Cosmos, Ukulele Underground, and Flea Market Music.

http://www.tricornpublications.com/uke_contest.htm

Thanks for reading ukulele player
and thanks to Kala Ukuleles for their support.



Q&A

Send your questions via email:
Uke-maker@tricornpublications.com

Have a question about ukulele construction? tone-woods? the difference between curly koa and straight grain? ukulele setup? or the care and feeding of your uke...

Even if your ukulele is not a Kō Aloha, feel free to ask.

The Experts at Kō Aloha Ukulele will be happy to answer your questions in coming issues.

SEO

SEO stands for "search engine optimization. It is the "science" of using meta-data to attract the attention of search engines, like Google and Altavista in order to have your website noticed.

SEO technique often makes the difference between having a popular website and being a little-known secret. The former can help you become successful if whatever your endeavor. The latter means that once in a while you get lucky and someone actually visits your website. Often, quite by accident.

How do you get noticed?

Social Media helps get your name circulating, but, over all, understanding how search engines work and using wisely written meta-tags makes all the difference in the world.

I have a blog I use to promote my books. It is built on the platform known as "WordPress" and there are various themes that enhance the basic interface and make things more visually appealing. One of the "plug-ins" that I use is called "Yoast". It is a SEO tool.

Yoast helps you critique your blog or WordPress-based website for optimal performance with search engines. It gives you tips on how to improve the blog in order to attract Google and other

search engines and "bots" that crawl around the web finding information on multitudes of topics.

If you have a music site or a band to promote (or other business for that matter), using Yoast can help you get noticed by showing you what you can do to help search engines find you. Once that happens, you can sit back and wait, or you can jump online and start plugging your site on Twitter or other social media.

Does all of this take time? Absolutely, and there are tools to automate that process, but that is a subject for another issue. For now, explore SEO tools and see if you can get more traffic with a lot of time.





Ukulele Club Listings...

If you would like to list your club here, submit contact information at this website:

http://www.tricornpublications.com/uke_player.htm
or e-mail me at this address:
mickey@tricornpublications.com
We will add you to our list.

USA

Arizona

Scottsdale Strummers, Scottsdale AZ, Contact Pat McInnis
weekly daytime meeting, monthly evening meeting
email: pat@azukulele.com
website: azukulele.com

Tucson Ukesters

Tucson, AZ
Meet weekly - usually on Monday afternoon
Contact: Kristin Keller
twoazin@comcast.net

The Tucson Ukesters - performance group

Michael Crownhart - Group leader
Contact: AzRedShoe@juno.com

Phoenix Ukulele Meetup

<http://www.meetup.com/The-Phoenix-Ukulele-Meetup-Group/>
4th Thursday at Dolce Video Coffee Bar
1025 E Camelback Rd, Phoenix, AZ 85014
Contact: Carolyn Sechler carolyn@azcpa.com

Phoenix Ukulele Meetup

Meeting weekly on Tuesday Nights at Cabin Coffee
Other workshops and meetings as published.
Web site: <http://www.meetup.com/The-Phoenix-Ukulele-Meetup-Group/>
Email: Tom@Kanikapila.us

California

Ukulele Clubs continued

Nuked Ukes

We are in Auburn California. Welcoming players from all levels.
contact: Loyce Smallwood
loy@foothill.net
www.kahi.com/loyce'sblog

Ukulele Society of America

Contact: Richard Douglas
(760) 458-6656
300 Carlsbad Village Dr.
Carlsbad CA, 92008
http://launch.groups.yahoo.com/group/ukulele_society_of_america

Ukulele Club of Santa Cruz

www.ukuleleclub.com

One of the Largest Ukulele clubs in America! Usually meets every third thursday at Bocci's celler in Santa Cruz, but check the website, cause it sometimes changes. Or email Andy@cruzio.com for club information.

Ukulele University

New uke club in the Sacramento, CA. Area. Meet 1st Thursday eve monthly
email: stuherreid@yahoo.com
website: www.ukeuniversity.com

San Jose Ukulele Club

Every second and fourth Tuesday in the month.
Beginner session at 6:30 p.m. Regular meeting from 7 to 9 p.m.
We meet at the Fresh Choice Restaurant in the Almaden Plaza, at the intersection of Almaden Expressway and Blossom Hill Road, just off Hwy 85.
e-mail: sanjoseukeclub@gmail.com

San Diego Ukulele Meetup Group

<http://www.meetup.com/San-Diego-Ukulele-Meetup-Group/>
We meet on the first Tuesday of the month at Lion Coffee downtown @ 6:30pm.

"Ukulele Jam" hosted by Shirley Orlando.

Meets Thursday evenings at 6:30. All levels welcome. Music is contemporary, from tin pan alley to the beach boys, etc.
16852 Gothard St Huntington Beach CA 92647.
shirthings@aol.com or encantada@cox.net

Petalukes, Petaluma, CA

Meet every Thursday night, other times too. All levels welcome, music provided
Contact: petaluke@comcast.net
website: <http://launch.groups.yahoo.com/group/Petaluke/>

High Desert Ukulele Club, Antelope Valley, Ca

highdesertukuleleclub.com or email highdesertukuleleclub@gmail.com

Canogahana Players

every second and fourth Sunday, Noon to 2PM
Guitar Merchant 7503 Topanga Canyon Blvd, Canoga Park, CA

Ukulele Clubs continued

The Pluckin' Strummers - A Los Angeles Ukulele Club

<http://pluckinstrummers.wordpress.com/>

Meet: 2nd & 4th Saturdays of the month. 10:00–Noon (unless otherwise stated).

Christ Church Griffith Park, Atwater Village 3852 Edenhurst, Los Angeles, CA

Colorado

The **Denver Uke Community** has been bringing Ukemaniacs together since 2005. We meet each month on the third Saturday at Swallow Hill Music Association at 10:30am. All skill levels from beginner to "Wow that person ROCKS the Ukulele", we also play a wide range of music, from country, tin pan alley, Hawaiian.

<http://launch.groups.yahoo.com/group/UkuleleCommunityDenver/>

Connecticut

The KookeeUkies Ukulele Club of Southern Connecticut

Visit our website on meetup.com for meetup dates and times.

<http://www.meetup.com/The-Ukulele-Club-of-Southern-Connecticut-The-KookeeUkies/>

Ukulele Club and The Four Strings Ukulele Band of Southern Connecticut,

<http://www.orgsites.com/ct/uke-club/index.html>

petejhnsn@sbcglobal.net

Florida

Tampa Bay Ukulele Society

www.meetup.com/tampabayukes

Check out the website for scheduled "meetups". This groups is very active.

Florida Ukulele Network

www.FloridaUkuleleNetwork.org

F.U.N. has meet-up groups in Broward, Palm Beach, and the Space Coast

Hawaii

UkuleleClubofKona.com

meets Wednesday evenings from 6 to 8 pm

Keauhou Shopping Center, 7 miles south of Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i

Illinois

CHUG - CHicago Ukulele Group

We have our monthly Chicago Uke Jam the 3rd Saturday of every month.

Ukulele Clubs continued

Please contact Henry at Henriness@gmail.com

Oak Park Ukulele Meetup Group aka The Harrison Street Ukulele Players

Every Thursday 7P-9P Venue: La Majada Restaurant - Banquet Room
226 Harrison Street, Oak Park IL 60304 website: www.ukulele.meetup.com/89
contact: wonderwallemporium@yahoo.com

Kansas (and Western Missouri)

Kansas City Ukesters

<http://www.kcuke.com>

Kentucky

Kentucky Ukes

meeting the fourth Sunday of every month
KentuckianaUkes@yahoo.com

Michigan

Ukulele Jam, 4th Tuesday night of the Month Oz's
Music Ann Arbor MI.
jerryefmail@yahoo.com

Minnesota

Two Harbors Ukulele Group (THUG), Two Harbors MN.
Email: al@agatebaymusic.com

StrumMn ukulele players
<http://strummn.shutterfly.com/>

Nebraska Ukulele Strummers

4stringsofswing@gmail.com

Nevada

The Ukulele Club of Las Vegas

www.meetup.com/ukulele-club-of-las-vegas

"Uke Nights in Reno"

Email: Rich@PlayUke.net
Local Uke gathering in Reno, NV

New Mexico

Ukulele Clubs continued

The High Desert Sand Fleas

Meet the 2nd & 4th Thursday of each month at the
Albuquerque Press Club [6pm - 9pm]
2101 Highland Park Circle, Albuquerque, New Mexico - USA
contact: Stephen Hunt via email: hdsfgcea@gmail.com.
<http://sites.google.com/site/hdsfgcea/>

New York

Ukulele Club of Potsdam (New York)

meet-up every other Friday at 5PM at Tim's Comic & Game, 6 Main Street
contact: Tim Connolly tim@discoverpotsdam.com call: (315) 268-1598.
Loaner ukes available. Bring your uke and leave your cares at home!

The Lower Westchester Ukulele Club, Westchester County, New York

<http://lowerwestchesterukuleleclub.webstarts.com/>
E-mail: lowerwestchesterukuleleclub@hotmail.com

North Carolina

Charlotte Area Ukulele Jam

contact: ukulelerobby@gmail.com
First Saturday of each month. 3 - 5 PM At "Aloha Snow"
www.alohasnow.com

Ohio

COUP (Central Ohio Ukulele Peeps)

coup@tricornpublications.com

Jumping Flea Night Monthly uke strum-along

Cleveland Heights, Ohio. LAST Tuesdays 7:30 - 8:30 at Coventry Village Library.
Free & open to everyone!! Contact: melissaogrady@ymail.com

Oklahoma

Tulsa Ukulele Club

Meeting the needs of ukulele players in the greater Tulsa area
tulsaukes.blogspot.com
contact via e-mail: rskjrmall@gmail.com

Oregon

Portland Ukulele Association

<http://www.pdxuke.org>
pua@teleport.com
Making music together since 2001!

Ukulele Clubs continued

Pennsylvania

Allegheny Ukulele Kollektive (Look for us on Facebook!) New uke group taking shape. Hoping for twice monthly jams and sing-alongs for all levels.
Hollidaysburg/Altoona, Pennsylvania, Contact: Steve kss15@psu.edu

South Carolina

Lowcountry Strummers Ukulele Club

Charleston, SC metro area. We meet twice a month. One beginner class and open Jam each month. All are Welcome.
www.lowcountrystrummers.com e-mail lowcountrystrummers@gmail.com

Texas

Robert S. Sparkman
sparky.judy@tx.rr.com

Lone Star Ukulele Club (in North Dallas)

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/lonestarukuleles>

The Dallas Ukulele Headquarters

Go to www.meetup.com and search The Dallas Ukulele Headquarters to join the group. Lots of fun events and jams!

CHUG - Coffee House Ukulele Gang

Fort Worth, Texas

This wild west ukulele gang meets the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of every month.
Contact Steve for more info. (steve_w_williams@yahoo.com)

Vermont

Vermont Ukulele Society

email: vyhnak@sover.net

Meets on the second and fourth Mondays of each month.

Virginia Ukulele Club

Vienna, Virginia

Meeting twice a month to play a huge range of traditional, tin pan alley, standards, and lots of pop tunes. Members come from the whole DC metro area, including Virginia, Washington DC, and Maryland. All ages and levels of ability welcome.

Contact:

Ben Farrington

ukeclub@yahoo.com

Ukulele Clubs continued

Washington

Seattle Ukulele Players Association (SUPA)
www.seattleukulele.org/

Cowlitz Ukulele Association
Longview, WA. 98626
CowUke@yahoo.com

Wisconsin

CheezLand Uke Band - JoeSexton@aol.com
Website: CheezLandUkeBand.com
Tuesday night at Leithold Music in downtown La Crosse, WI.
Beginners, Mid-Level, Advanced Players

Canada

STRING ALONG UKULELE CLUB
DUNDAS ONTARIO CANADA
www.stringalongukulele.ca

Nanaimo Ukulele Circle - Nanaimo, BC, Canada
www.ukecircle.com e-mail: ukecircle@gmail.com

UK England

Ukulele Society of Great Britain
43 Finstock Road, London W10 6LU
Tel: 020 8960 0459
Email: m@gicman.com

Cambridge Ukulele Co-operative [Cuckoo]
Meet alternate Sundays 2pm-6pm
The Portland Arms Cambridge CB4 3BAIf
If you're cuckoo about ukes come and join us.
<http://www.myspace.com/cambridgeukuleleclub>

Ukulele Philharmonic Orchestra of Sudbury
Tuesdays evenings from 7.00pm
The Institute, Station Road, Sudbury Suffolk CO10 2SP
Beginners Welcome

Uke Wednesday Jam
Every Wednesday 7 till closing Downstairs @ The Royal George
Charing Cross Road, London, WC2H 0EA, U.K.
contact: Quinc email: qnc@qnctv.com
<http://ukeweds.intodit.com>

Ukulele Clubs continued

SCUPA - Second City Ukulele Players Association

We meet weekly on Tuesdays at 7:30pm in the upstairs room
at The New Billesley Pub, Brook Lane, Kings Heath,
Birmingham, West Midlands B13 0AB

We accommodate all players beginners to experienced.

Call or text Jon 0787 353 1161 or email:

jay.eye@bigfoot.com for more information.

Stockton to Darlington Ukulele Express

Meeting monthly in Darlington, northeast England new members always
welcome. contact Simon at simonb250@hotmail.com
<http://ukuleleexpress.blogspot.com>

Tune Army Ukulele Club

The Bay Horse, Front Street, Whickham, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE16 4EF
Meeting first Monday of the month 7:30 - 9:30
<http://tunearmy.blogspot.com/>

UkeGlos Ukulele Club

Meets Every Mondays every month, 8.00pm
The Exmouth Arms, Bath Rd
Cheltenham, GL53 7LX

Wooden & banjo ukes welcome. All levels of playing ability & song styles. **For
full details visit: www.ukeglos.co.uk**
<http://www.ukeglos.co.uk>

Ukulele Sundays host:Tim Smithies

email: tim@timsmithies.com

I host a Ukulele Jam session on Sunday evenings in Sheffield UK called 'Ukulele
Sundays' All welcome - 8.30pm onwards. Riverside Cafe Bar.
<http://www.ukulelesundays.co.uk>.

"Brighton ukulele Sundays"

Meet first Sunday of the month at the Brunswick Pub in Hove East Sussex UK.
Visit Facebook Brighton Ukulele Sundays for more details.

Leicester Ukulele Club

All welcome, First Monday of the month,
Upstairs at Babalas Bar, Queens Road, Leicester
Contact: dave.davies1@virgin.net or mark@littleredtruck.co.uk

Herts of Uke Ukulele Club

Every 4th Sunday - 6.30pm onwards.
Meet at The Doctors Tonic, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, AL8 6PR

All Players Welcome

Websites: <http://sites.google.com/site/hertsofuke/>

email: hertsofuke@gmail.com

Luton, UK

We meet once a fortnight at Greenbank Music Village,
Greenbank Hal, Cobden Street, Luton, LU2 0NG
Anyone interested can give us a call:

Keith 07745 613931

Scott 07976 895067

Gerry 07785 117029

<http://sites.google.com/site/ukuleleworkshopinluton/>

Ireland

UKULELE IRELAND

ukulele@ireland.com

Irish ukulele club meets on the second saturday of
each month. Players from all over Ireland. Ukeplayers of all levels welcome. If
you are a visiting uke player please feel free to come along. The meetups are
held at 2, eden park, Dunlaoire, Co. Dublin.

Ukuholics

truepants@eircom.net

The Ukuholics are based in the Irish Midlands and meet once a month.
Players of any or no ability will fit in nicely!
Visit www.ukuholics.webs.com for more info

Scotland

Monday Ukearist

Edinburgh's very own ukulele gathering. We gather once a fortnight on
Mondays from 7 to 10(pm!) at Mackenzie School of English near the foot of
Leith Walk

6 John's Place,

EH6 7EP

Contact: John Hobson, +44 (0)7940 513969, jhobson@gmail.com

<http://ukearist.co.uk>

South Wales

Ukulele Nights

Cardiff's Ukulele Jam Session and Cabaret

Meet Mondays 8 p.m. at assorted venues.

Visit www.ukenights.org.uk for full listings and updates.

Contact: Nick Canham witt29-ukenights1@yahoo.co.uk 07971 - 719626

Germany

Ukulele Club of Germany

info@ukulelenclub.de

www.ukulelenclub.de (home page)

www.ukulelenboard.de (message board)

Deutscher Ukulelenclub

c/o Raimund Sper

Korneliusstrasse 1
D-47441 Moers
tel. +49/2841-394837
fax + 49/2841-394836
www.ukulelenclub.de

Holland

Ukulele Jamboree in Rotterdam - hosted by 'The Uke Box'
The night is comprised of a workshop, performances & open mic.
To Join the Mailing List send an e-mail to: guaranteed2swoon@gmail.com

To read more about this and our other ukulele projects go to:
<http://www.ukulele-interventie.blogspot.com> (Dutch)
Visit my personal blog spot and click on 'Ukulele' under "Contents" (English)
<http://www.shelleyrickey.blogspot.com>

'Uke & D'Uke'
<http://ukeandduke.blogspot.com/> (in Dutch)

Note: Shelley has an Etsy store where you can find ukulele related items for sale, check it out: <http://www.thejumpingfleamarket.etsy.com>

France

Ukulele Club of Paris
Thursday starting 7:30 PM
Meetings are announced on the website King David Ukulele Station at this URL:
<http://www.ukulele.fr>

C.O.U.L.E.
Club Olympique de Ukulélé de Lille et des Environs
<http://www.COULE.fr>

"Stay cool, come and play with the C.O.U.L.E."

VSAlele
Association des Ukuleliste de Valbonne Sophia Antipolis (Alpes Maritimes)
Visit www.vsalele.org for more info

"Ukulele Social Club de Picardie"
Amiens (France)
See more here : <http://www.ukulpic.fr/>

Clermont-Ferrand call "Le BOUC" (in french, Bournat Original Ukulele Club).
Our website is : <http://le-bouc.blogspot.com/>

Spain

Club del Ukelele de Madrid (SPAIN)
<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=131466486122>

"Para todos los aficionados al ukelele que viven en Madrid"



USA

The Inaugural San Diego Ukulele Festival

Thursday July 14, 2011 to Saturday July 16, 2011

<http://www.sandiegoukefestival.moonfruit.com/>

UKULELE MELEE

THURSDAY, JULY 28, 2011

4:00PM – 8:00PM

deCordova Sculpture Park & Museum

51 Sandy Pond Rd, Lincoln, MA 01773

Festival with performances by New England's talented ukulele musicians.

Ukulele class for the first timers (instruments available for class)

Workshops for beginners and intermediates

BRING YOUR UKULELE & PICNIC

Hosted by:

UKULELE UNION OF BOSTON

UKULELE UNION OF HARVARD

<http://www.bostonuke.com/events/23593621/?eventId=23593621&action=detail>

Belgium

Ukulele Zaza (Belgium) www.myspace.com/ukulelezaza

France

Marie Darling (France) www.myspace.com/mariedarling

Patti Plinko and her Boy (UK)

www.myspace.com/pattiplinkoandherboy

Les Ukulélé Boyz (France) www.myspace.com/ukuleleboys47

Vonck and Vlam

www.vonck-vlam.eu

Check out the Website... that's great entertainment!



Essential Links from the World-Wide-Web

UkeTalk - <http://uketalk.com/links.html>

"Ukulele Spoken Here" is one phrase that comes to mind. If you want to talk ukulele or catch all the news that is news, this is a can't miss website.

Brudda Bu's Ukulele Heaven

<http://www.geocities.com/~ukulele/index.html>

If you'd like to learn the history of some of ukulele's greatest players, this site is absolutely essential.

Ukulelia - <http://www.ukulelia.com/>

The World's Greatest Ukulele WebLog" Need I say more?

Ukulele Cosmos - <http://www.ukulelecosmos.com>

One of the hottest ukulele forums on the web. Don't Miss It!

Ukulele Underground

<http://www.ukuleleunderground.com/forum/index.php>

Another really popular ukulele forum, lots of Hawaiian players and folks from the West Coast of the Mainland USA.

Flea Market Music - <http://www.fleamarketmusic.com/default.asp>

This is Jumpin' Jim Beloff's website. He has lots of great resources and an excellent forum as well. You can buy Flukes and Fleas there, too. Jim also has lots of songbooks, DVDs, and other great stuff there.

UkeLadyMusic - <http://www.ukeladymusic.com/>

Auntie Noel runs a really great shop. Her passion is ukulele and it shows.

Contact Us: phone 214-924-0408

or email noel.tardy@yahoo.com

Kiwi Ukulele

New Zealand's Ukulele Companion

<http://www.kiwiukulele.co.nz/>

Bounty Music

<http://www.ukes.com/>

Bounty Music Maui

111 Hana Hwy. #105

Kahului, Maui, HI 96732

open 9 :00 to 6:00 Monday thru Saturday * Sunday 10:00 to 4:00

Phone: (808) 871-1141

Fax: (808) 871-1138

Online Resources

<http://www.tikiking.com>

tikiking@tikiking.com

comment=Website listing:

Home of Tiki King Ukuleles since 1999. lots of neat Ukulele stuff, such as the webs largest Ukulele makers database, Custom Hand Built Tiki King Ukuleles, and ukulele stuff to see and buy. We have Flukes and Fleas, Ukulele Art Gallery, Ukulele classes, chord charts, CD's and more!

Bonsai Garden Orchestra

email: info@bgo.nu

Webside: <http://www.bgo.nu>

MySpace: <http://www.myspace.com/bonsaigardenorchestra>

World Music Festival "glattundverkehrt" on july 22nd .

www.glattundverkehrt.at

UkePics

Assorted Ukulele Picture Exposé

<http://www.ukepics.com/>

How High The Moon Publishing

Publisher of the Jam Book "Play Well with Other"

9826 James A. Reed Rd. Kansas City, MO 64134

816-965-0183 or 816-728-6936

<http://www.moonbookstore.com>

Uke Farm - <http://www.ukefarm.com/home.HTML>

Uke Farm Radio - <http://www.live365.com/stations/ukefarm>

GoChords

<http://www.gochords.com>

"GoChords™" is an easy-to-use writing and playing tool with moveable chord tablature!"

Live 'Ukulele

Tabs, lessons, and info for 'ukulele enthusiasts

<http://liveukulele.com/>

<http://ukeattitude.blogspot.com/>

<http://twitter.com/ukeattitude>

<http://www.gotaukulele.com>

<http://ukulele-perspective.com>